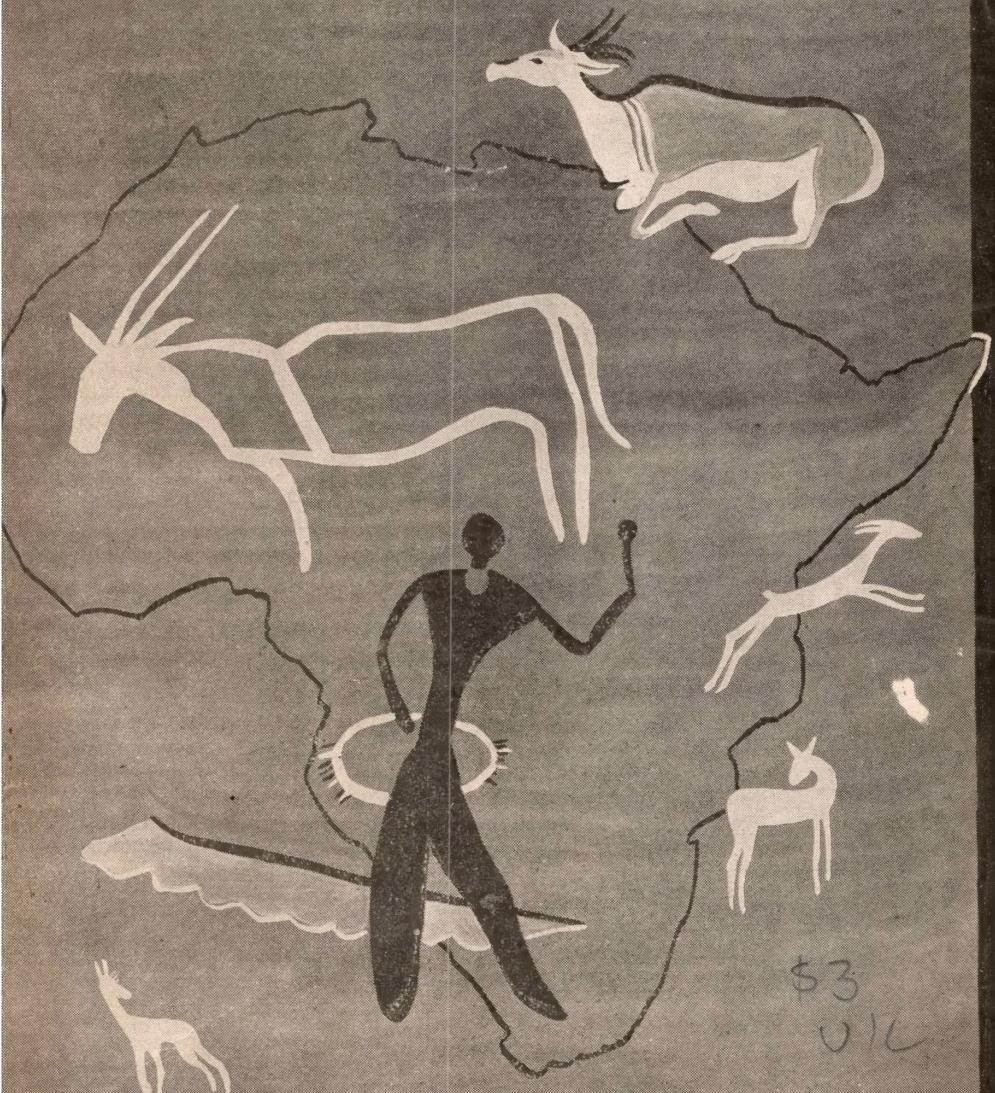


# SOUTH AFRICA



N.Z. ARMED SERVICES CURRENT AFFAIRS BULLETIN  
VOL. 3 NO. 6

# SOUTH AFRICA



by ERLE ROSE

## 1. Early History

The north-lying bay, overlooked by a striking flat-topped mountain behind which lies the Cape of Good Hope, became a place of shelter for European voyagers, who sometimes left messages for one another beneath flat stones, now in the museums, as early as the sixteenth century. Jan van Riebeck landed at Table Bay in 1652 with instructions from the Dutch East India Company to build a fort "to bear the name of Good Hope" and to plant a garden "in the best and fattest land." The Cape was thus occupied as a provision depot for the company's ships. A few settlers of Dutch or German birth were encouraged to graze cattle in the nearby valleys. Later came more Dutch, and Huguenots (protestant French).

In 1795, when the Netherlands were under French dominion, British troops occupied Cape Colony. By this time the settlers there were conscious of their identity as Afrikanders, as distinct from Hollanders, which is the South African name for men from the Low Countries. In 1814 the colony was ceded to the British by the Prince of Orange when he returned to the Netherlands from his exile in England. Despite the generous terms of the peace settlement, British title to the Cape should be regarded as resting on right of conquest.

Apart from the residence of Government officers in Capetown, British settlement did not begin until 1820, in which year an enactment of doubtful wisdom made English the sole official language. Although Sir Benjamin d'Urban, who became Governor in 1834, attempted to gain the confidence of both races, suspicion and hostility were aroused by the manner in which the British Government achieved the abolition of slavery, upon which much of the Boer's prosperity rested.

## 2. From Great Trek to Boer War

That the money paid to the Cape farmers to compensate them for the loss of their slaves was less than they claimed the Government had promised them may not be surprising; but all claims were made payable and had to be proven in London. This was

too much for the farmers, some of whom left for the interior without making a claim for even such money as they might have had through the agency of the banks or other intermediaries.

The *trek* was to the Boer not only a mode of travel, but also a means of political self-expression. Eric A. Walker, in his "History of South Africa," says, "Long before the end of the seventeenth century the frontier *veeboer* (cattle-farmer) was in process of becoming the *trekboer* . . . who was to blaze the trail for civilization far into the interior of Africa." Resentment against the authorities at Capetown, or in the Netherlands, or in London, and a desire to be free of their control, had become part of the frontiersman's make-up before ever the British replaced the Dutch as their rulers. In 1837, the year Victoria came to the throne, occurred the Great Trek, when thousands of Boers moved towards those territories which were later to become the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic. What element, if any, of British sovereignty still rested upon these erstwhile British subjects? That was the question to which, finally, it took war to find the answer.

It will be of interest to notice that Sir George Grey, of New Zealand fame, was Governor of Cape Colony from 1854 to 1861. Grey recommended the federation of all the South African states as the working solution to their political problems, but neither the colonists nor the Colonial Office were ready for it then.

What did happen in South Africa was that gold was discovered in the Transvaal, in the territory ruled by President Paul Kruger—over which the British had not effectively asserted their suzerainty, while yet, to their own minds, they had never renounced it.

An ostensible cause, leading to the Boer War, was the denial to the Uitlanders, the gold-seekers newly come to the Transvaal, of civil rights. The aspirations of wealthy mine-owners cannot be ruled out, as a contributing factor; but the main issue, raised into dangerous prominence by the lesser ones, was the question of sovereignty. Who ruled in South Africa?

### 3. New Zealand and the South African War, 1899–1902

The war is memorable to New-Zelanders as providing the first occasion for this country to send a contingent overseas to fight, supporting Britain. In proposing to the House of Representatives the despatch of a force of volunteer mounted rifles, "between the ages of twenty-three and forty, all men to be unmarried," the premier, Richard Seddon, emphasized that the strength of Britain was always our own protection. Apart from Italy and Greece, still grateful for her share in their own liberation, Britain at the end of last century stood without a friend in Europe. The Tsarist masters of Poland joined with the French in deprecating the nastiness of Imperialism. That the colonies should rally to Britain's aid in a colonial war, small though the forces they might send must be, was in itself a heartening sign. In England public opinion was by no means united. The Government had many, and bitter, critics.

At length Boer hopes of foreign intervention proved illusory ; both sides were sick of the war ; generous terms were advocated by Kitchener, amongst others, and peace was signed.

Most New-Zelanders were intensely interested in the war, shared the gloom of "Black Week," joined the singing of patriotic songs such as "The Soldiers of the Queen" with a fervour this war knows nothing of. Upon the relief of Mafeking Lambton Quay and London were both delirious. Children were christened after the war heroes and the names of battles with a generous abandonment of all consideration for their future, another custom which, fortunately for the children, has nearly died out.

#### 4. The South Africa Act (1909)

In 1902 the Boer republics again became British colonies. The goal of South Africa's far-sighted administrators was reached in 1909, when the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, Natal, and Cape Colony were formed into a South African Union. The four colonies are now provinces of the Union. English and Afrikaans, the African successor to Dutch, are both official languages. In the schools instruction may be given in English or in Afrikaans, according to locality, but facilities for the study of the alternative tongue are everywhere provided in the higher classes. Bi-lingualism is the ideal of the Civil services, and all public notices appear in both tongues.

By a compromise arranged for in the negotiations between the colonies, while Parliament meets at Capetown the administration of Union affairs is centred at Pretoria. The Court of Appeal sits in Bloemfontein. There are still in the South African legal system some elements of the old Roman-Dutch law, long since superseded in the Netherlands themselves by the Code Napoleon and a later more purely Dutch system. Generally speaking, the administration of justice is now upon the British model throughout the Union.

In the Australian Commonwealth certain powers have been surrendered by the States to the Commonwealth Government. It is, comparatively, a loose Federation. Although the provincial administrations in South Africa may control such matters as are delegated to them, their political identities have been merged in the Union more completely than the case has been in Australia, or, for that matter, in Canada. The effectiveness of the administration of any political unit is largely determined by the adequacy of its institutions for the area which they cover, and by the wisdom with which necessary division of powers between central and local authorities may be affected.



## PART II.—THE PEOPLE OF THE UNION

### 5. Statistics of Population

In 1921, when a full census of all races in South Africa was taken, the population figures were :—

#### *Europeans*—

Cape Colony	...	...	650,609
Natal	...	...	136,838
Orange Free State	...	...	188,556
Transvaal	...	...	543,485
Union Total		...	1,519,488

In 1926, of the European population, 57 per cent. were of South African Dutch descent, 34 per cent. of British descent, 4 per cent Jews,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. German.

			Native Percentage of Total Popu- lation.
<i>African Natives</i> —			
Cape Colony	...	...	1,640,000 59
Natal	...	...	1,139,800 80
Orange Free State	...	...	421,900 67
Transvaal	...	...	1,495,800 71
Union total		...	4,697,500 67·8

#### *Asiatics*—

Cape Colony	...	...	6,000	...
Natal	...	...	141,000	...
Orange Free State	...	...	100	...
Transvaal	...	...	13,400	...
Union total		...	160,500	...

#### *Others, and Mixed Races*—

Cape Colony	...	...	485,000	...
Natal	...	...	11,000	...
Orange Free State	...	...	17,750	...
Transvaal	...	...	32,000	...
Union total		...	544,750	...

The grand total, Union population, for 1911 was 5,973,394; for 1921, 6,928,580. The total white population in 1926 was 1,676,660; in 1931, 1,828,175.

About half of the European population of South Africa profess adherence to the Dutch Reformed Church. Nearly a fifth of the whites are Church of England. The members of the Methodist

Church are more numerous than either the Presbyterians or Roman Catholics, and of all the Christian sects the Methodists claim the highest percentage,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of Native adherents. The Church of England claims nearly 8 per cent., the Dutch church 5 per cent. Of non-Europeans, 44 per cent. are returned as having no religion. There are numbers of Hindus, Mahomedans, Buddhists, Confucians, and Parsees. The Jewish community is also of considerable strength; but none of the Christian churches, other than those mentioned above, can claim more than 2 per cent. of the European population amongst their adherents.

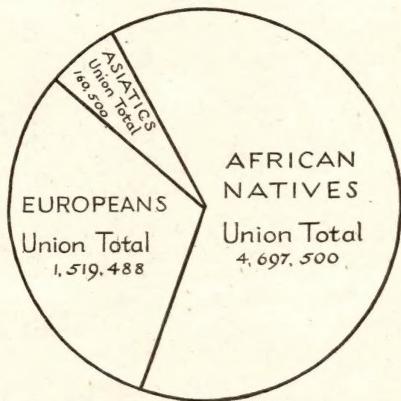
## 6. The Afrikander

In the Boers' ancestry Dutch, Fleming, French, and German stocks were mingled. The word "Boer" means, simply, "farmer." "Of all his ancestors," says Lewis Sowden in his book, *The Union of South Africa*, "the Afrikander is probably most proud of his French Huguenots. The Afrikander is on the whole a brighter fellow than the Dutchman, with a sprightlier sense of humour and a lighter touch in his language."

The Afrikander of to-day is usually a keen sportsman, but he also excels in intellectual pursuits. He does well in examinations, looks for culture more earnestly than the Englishman, makes a good professor as well as a good doctor or engineer. He is home-loving, hospitable, courteous; but he must be some one's boss. An Afrikander without the aristocratic touch is unimaginable. Grant him that, and his manner with black men is easier than the Englishman's. He can still be suspicious, on occasion. Many thousands of Afrikanders live to-day, as in previous centuries, in the more or less isolated conditions that belong to the South African veld.

In 1925 the use of Dutch as an official language was extended to include Afrikaans. That the speech of the South African Dutch had developed away from the language of their mother country was already apparent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Until recently the Afrikander as well as the Englishman looked down upon this speech as being colloquial, and even slangy; but it has now won its way into general recognition and is replacing Dutch for all official and social purposes.

## RACE



## 7. The British South African

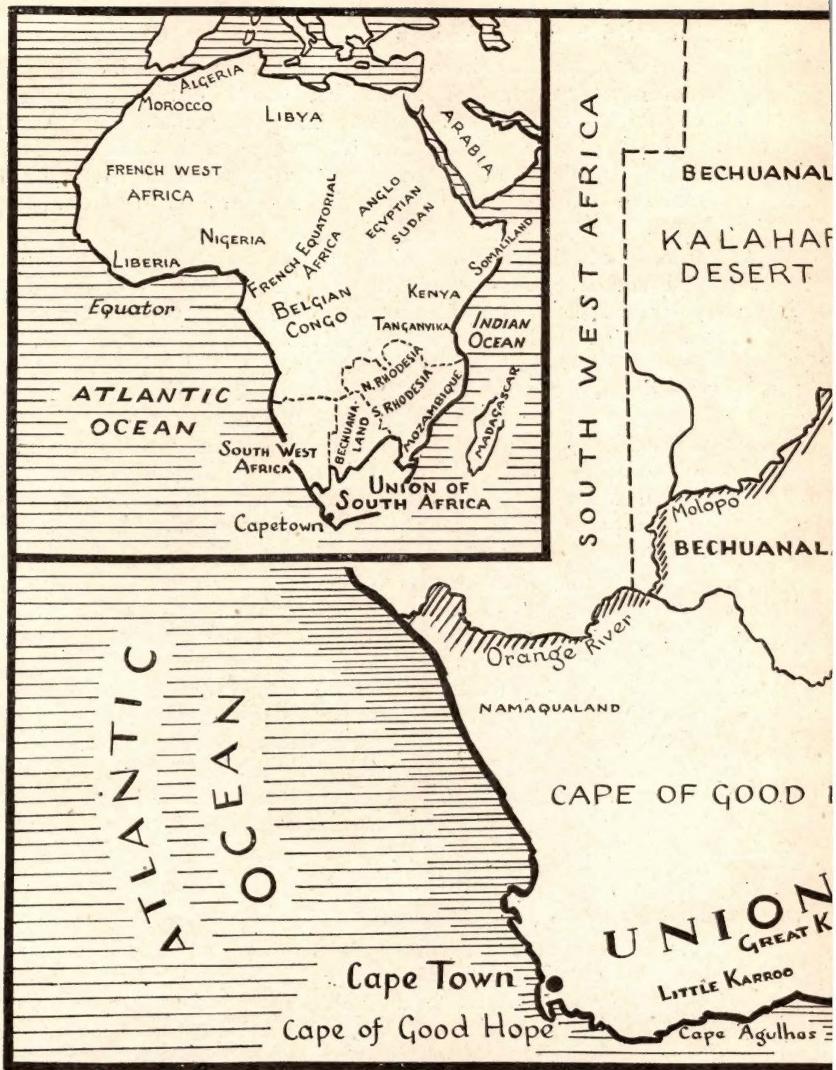
Our own kinsfolk in South Africa are in the minority, twice over. They are outnumbered, nearly two to one, by the Afrikander Dutch, ten to one by the Kaffirs. They perpetuate their English way of life a little self-consciously, and, as their critics say, conspicuously. They tend to make and keep to their English communities in some of the larger cities and country districts. They club together.

It has been argued that as they make South Africa their home they should live whole-heartedly for that country and its future, which the English will claim they are doing. But they want the South Africa of the future to bear the stamp of the English tradition, to speak the world-wide English language, to be *their* South Africa, as well as the Dutchmen's. The flag, the national anthem, the mother-tongue, the commonwealth—all these have been disputed upon in recent years, and it is not to be wondered at if people with just the normal amount of patriotism, as well as the die-hards, are now a little touchy. What does amaze any one who is conscious of the complexity of the South African setting is the degree of unity that does exist.

Not only the British-born, however, are eager to preserve the Imperial connection. The colonial imperialist is usually he who believes the menace of foreign annexation to be real. Field Marshal Smuts and his Afrikander followers are responsive to the wider loyalty, in the Field Marshal's case certainly, for his followers probably, because they have realized that the world situation to-day favours larger political groupings. In the British Commonwealth they share with us a national group, already functioning. To put the truth bluntly, on account of their numerical strength it needs a sufficiency of Afrikanders so thinking to keep South Africa British.

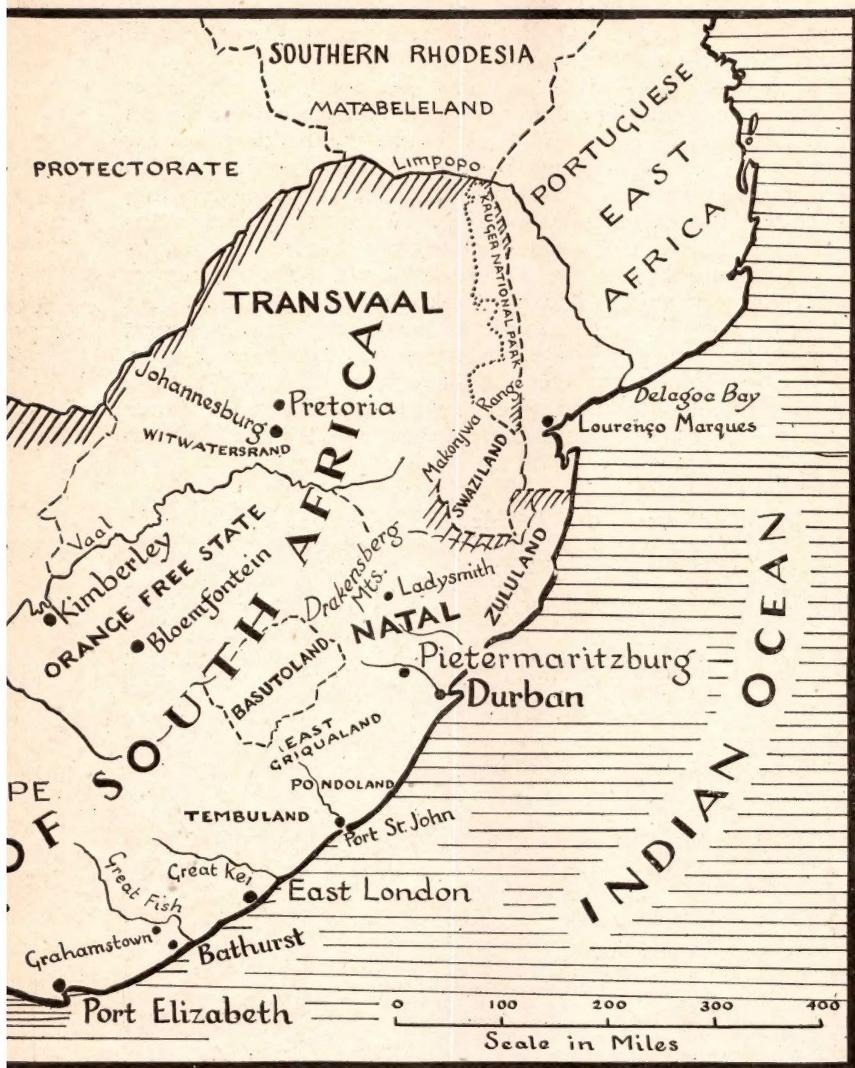
## 8. The South African Natives

Of all the elements, white or coloured, in the South African population the most numerous by far are the Bantu tribes, sometimes called the Kaffirs. The word *Bantu* in their own language means "men." They live in tribes, of which some of the best known are : Zulus, Swazis, Matabele, Damaras, Pondos, Tembus, Bechuanas, Mashonas, and Basutos. The Zulu of to-day may be houseboy to a white man's family, or work on the wharves, but he comes of a military aristocracy the like of which, actually, the world has seldom seen. In the days of the chief, Tchaka, the discipline of the Zulu *impi*s was something for a W.O. I to dream about. He who did not please Tchaka died forthwith. The *impi* was a band of, say, three thousand fighting men, six-footers, athletic and ruthless to the last degree. There were many such *impi*s in Tchaka's army. The age of the machine-gun has outmoded them. Quelled by our civilization they have ceased their fighting, their numbers increase.



What is true of the Zulus is true, generally, of the other Kaffir tribes. Except as menials, as part-time labourers, there is no place for them in the white man's civilization. They become conscious of the situation, they outnumber the whites by four to one. What is South Africa to do about them?

The policy of the South African Government has been described as "trusteeship." The Bantu have a limited, a very limited, degree of representation in the Legislature. Considerable areas of good land—in a country where many square miles can by no means be



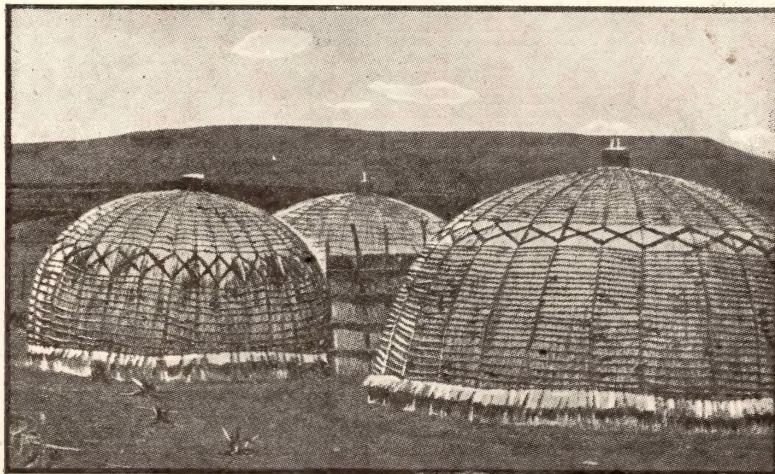
so described—have been allocated as Native reserves, and the employment of Native labour has been regulated. The Bantu provide most of the Union's unskilled manual labour, nearly a fifth of them living in urban areas, where they are segregated and their movements controlled. For many of them their lives are divided between their tribal areas, farming, and their employment in the mines for a contracted period. There are Native schools, but the willingness of the blacks to be educated appears to be greater than the opportunities his trustees have so far been able to give him.

Not many Native children go beyond the lower standards, not all of them by any means attend school.

One accusation sometimes levelled at the South African whites is in fact unfounded. The Europeans did not deprive the Kaffirs of their homeland. They may have fought the Bantu tribes for the territories they now occupy, but the tribes had no better claim to them than the English or Dutch had. They were invaders, too, more recent invaders, generally speaking. When the earliest settlers arrived there, South Africa was inhabited, sparsely, by the yellow-skinned emotional Hottentots, a pastoral people. Their survivors have been largely absorbed in the Cape coloured population. An even more primitive people than the Hottentots were the Bushmen, of whom a few still live in the remoter parts. They were artistic. Their drawings still excite interest. They were good shots with a poisoned arrow, good fleeting targets for a Boer's rifle, and whatever may be said either for or against them they have the best claim to the title, "the dispossessed."

### 9. The Cape Coloured, the Asiatic, the Poor White

More than a third of the people in Cape Colony are half-caste, or, as the South Africans call them, coloured people. Colour prejudice is very strong. The rigid views of the Boer on racial questions, although deplored by Britons at a distance, have soon communicated themselves to other white settlers. Faced by the enormous preponderance of dark-skinned people in the continent where he lives, exclusiveness, segregation, these appear to the White the only way in which his own identity can be preserved. Is it not best to recognize that European and Native have distinct cultures, using that word in its broadest sense, and to keep them distinct



Zulu huts in Natal.

for the benefit of both? The barriers thus raised by prejudice, however, have not been absolute. Some early settlers, lacking white women to wed (or not to wed) made unions with Hottentots. Or perhaps the woman was a Malay, brought from the Dutch East India possessions to the Cape. From these unions, legal or not, have sprung the Cape coloured people, who, although not accepted by the whites, yet hold themselves aloof from the Natives. Other half-castes there are, of white and Kaffir blood, and a mingling of races indeed, though fewer in numbers than the more distinct stocks, of every kind and in every degree.

In Natal at one time the Hindu population outnumbered the white. There are ex-coolies, first imported to labour on the sugar-plantations, hawkers, respectable Bombay merchants. The celebrated Mahatma Gandhi began his career in South Africa. The Government of India maintains an Agent-General in South Africa to look after the interests of Indians there.

One obvious result, the fulfilment of prophecies made so far back as the days of Dutch rule, of South Africa's reliance on Native labour has been the growth of a poor white class, now disturbingly numerous. These are the Europeans who would be cast by commercial competition on to the market for unskilled labour, if there were such a market for whites. They cannot compete with the more successful farmers, industrialists, traders, artisans, and so on, they cannot compete with Native labour, and, whatever of the successful European's stock-in-trade they may lack, the complex of racial superiority they will probably cling to.

## 10. Sport, the Arts, and Sciences

The Springboks originated the 3-4-1 scrum. They have always been particularly strong in team play. As in New Zealand, the Rugby game is more popular than Soccer. In cricket, since 1889 and up to just before the war, the South Africans had played nearly 60 test matches with England, winning 12, the English winning 28. South Africans were in the semi-finals of the European zone Davis Cup matches in 1935. Shooting, fishing, golf, and athletics are all popular.

Amongst the writings of South African authors perhaps the two most outstanding successes have been Olive Schreiner's novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, and William Plomer's *Double Lives*.

The number of moderately successful painters is considerable, but, as with literature, it is to be doubted whether the South Africans have yet found themselves. They lack matured originality. Such is the general opinion; but New-Zelanders interested in such things will probably agree that the framing of judicial opinions is the easiest and often the least valuable of all the arts. Whatever standard may be looked for, no achievement in the creative and enduring arts will come to any country without enthusiasm.

## PART III—SOUTH AFRICA: TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

### 11. Descriptive

The curved gables of houses and other buildings in the old Dutch style of architecture are a charming characteristic of the South African scene. There are other buildings in the Colonial style which one usually associates with Virginia and the New England States of North America. Despite the bad patches, the tradition of sound and graceful architecture has continued in South Africa to the present day. South African homes, like our own, have garden settings; but there is a brightness of sun, a clearness of atmosphere, a profusion of sharp contrasts in landscape and in climate, of tropical colourings here and there, that are, distinctively, South Africa's own.

South Africans speak of a summer season, from October to March, a winter season from April onwards, no spring, no autumn. Summer is the wetter season for the most part, although the southwest of Cape Colony is a region of winter rains. Thunderstorms and hailstorms are frequent, especially in the Transvaal. Snow falls on Table Mountain, on a rough average, one year in six. The Union is poorly supplied with forests. Agriculture has to cope with many difficulties. Cattle are given a lick to make up for mineral deficiency. One may see a Native "boy" whanging doses of this mixed up with molasses, on to the beasts' protruding tongues. Both sheep and cattle farming are now well established. From 1654 onwards ewes and rams from Holland have been crossed with the native stock, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Spanish Merino was proved satisfactory in South Africa. South African wool output in 1928 was about equal to that of New Zealand.

Between the coastal strip and the high plateau of the interior lies an escarpment of mountain ranges—the Roggeveld, the Nieuveld, the Stormberg, the Kahlamba, and the Drakensburg. The forests are mostly evergreen, and include the yellow woods, black iron-wood, the assegai wood, and the white pear. Tussocky grasses, brackens, and scrubby bush form the base of the typical unbroken landscape, but upon the high veld in summer may be seen "innumerable pink, white, and mauve flowers of cosmos which has spread among the indigenous flora."

South African orchards, and the fruit grown therein, are deservedly famous. Vines have been grown at the Cape, in the region of winter rainfall, since the early days of Dutch settlement. Sugar, cotton, tobacco, and tea are all cultivated. The main railway-lines have been planned to run from the coast to the mines, Johannesburg being the principal centre. The gauge is 3 ft. 6 in. as in New Zealand, but there are about 800 miles of 2 ft. gauge branch lines.

Considerable lengths of track have been electrified, modernity in this direction contrasting sharply with the vogue of the rickshaw boy in the city streets.

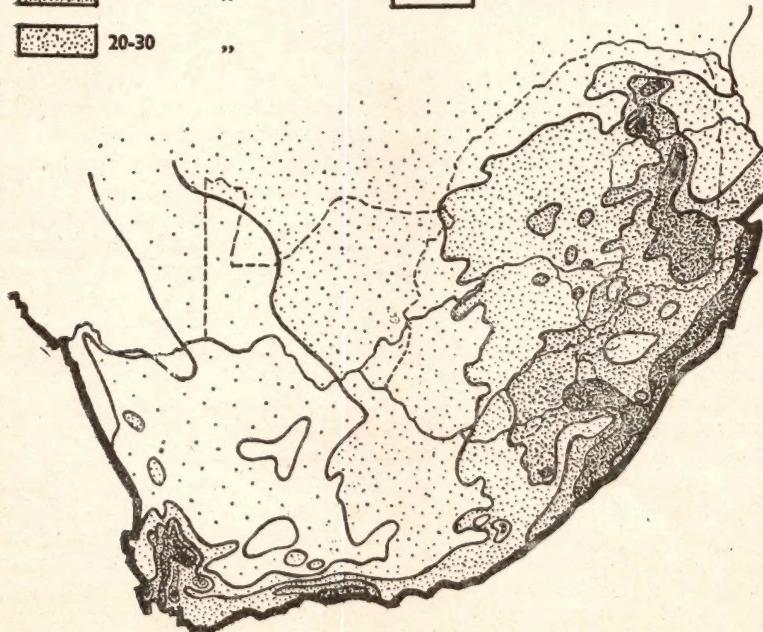
## 12. Mining and Economics

In 1867 diamonds were discovered in the Orange Free State, in 1884 gold in the Transvaal. To-day more than half of the Union's exports come from the mines, and for good or ill South Africa's economy is geared to them. So long as this is so there will not be lacking prophets of disaster to come, and her future prosperity must undoubtedly depend upon a less-specialized development of the country's resources. Manufactures, although stimulated by the war, are still mostly on a small scale and include the making of metal implements, foodstuffs and beverages, clothing, wagons and other vehicles, and articles of furniture.

Apart from those spectacular assets, the gold and diamond mines, the Union is fortunate in possessing vast coal resources, principally in the Transvaal, where the Witbank field—80 miles to the east of Johannesburg—is the largest, and in Natal where it lies beneath the

	over 60 inches.
	40-60 "
	30-40 "
	20-30 "

	10-20 inches.
	5-10 "
	under 5 inches.



Annual rainfall.

rather barren mountain-terrace land known as the Karroo. Copper, iron, tin, asbestos, silver, platinum, pitchblende (the ore from which radium is obtained), mica, and manganese are all worked in small quantities. The undeveloped iron resources have been described as enormous. Of the present-day mining industries copper is the oldest established.

### 13. Political

The principal political groupings in South Africa are the "South Africa" party, headed by Smuts; the "National" party, formerly led by General Hertzog with a more extreme, republican section led by Dr. Malan; the "Labour" party, which is a white labour party, and a "Dominion" party, which came into existence when Smuts and Hertzog formed their coalition in 1934. The Smuts-Hertzog combine is sometimes referred to as the "United" party, or as the "Fusion." The Dominion-ites and the Malan-ites refused to coalesce. Smuts was Prime Minister from the death of Botha in 1919 until, 1924 when Hertzog, aided by the Labour party, came into power. The fusion already mentioned lasted from 1934 until the outbreak of the present war, when the House divided on the question of immediate, active participation as favoured by Smuts. On this question Smuts secured the support of 80 members against 67, and South Africa thereupon entered the war, with Smuts as its leader.

Towards the end of last century South African politics were dominated by the Empire-building policy of the famous Cecil Rhodes, who was Prime Minister of the Cape until just before the Boer War. By the end of 1928 it became possible to travel from Capetown to the Egyptian border (and thence to Cairo) by public mechanical conveyance at fixed fares and without quitting territory under British control, near enough perhaps to the realization of Rhodes's Cape-to-Cairo dream. This achievement, and others like it, in the development of transport certainly help to show how closely the fortunes of South Africa are connected with those of other territories in the African continent. Pan-Africanism, therefore, is a dominant note in Union politics.

Recently, before the war, a new Union flag was adopted—the orange, white and blue of the House of Orange with the Union Jack and the flags of the two old republics imposed upon the white. This flag, along with the Union Jack, is flown on public buildings, including the Houses of Parliament. Along with its two capitals and its two flags South Africa also has two national anthems, an arrangement arrived at after much controversy. These are "God Save the King" and "Die Stem van Suidafrika," the latter being much better established than is our own "God Defend New Zealand." The Union Government is mandatory for the ex-German territory of South-west Africa, where its servants have to cope with three official languages, German having been recognized there as such by the Constitution of 1925. It was stated by Smuts, in an

address to his constituents in 1940, that, but for the prompt steps he had taken to reinforce and arm the South-west African police the previous year, the war might have started not in Poland but in Africa. Such, the Field-Marshal believed, was within the scope of the Nazi plans. The Union of South Africa now desires that the mandate should be terminated and the former German territory incorporated in the Union. In the *Auckland Star* of 26th April, 1945, a special correspondent in Capetown writes, "as a matter of active political and economic concern, to the great majority of South Africans on the home front the war effort has given place to domestic problems." What may be described as the Union's African problems (as distinct from world problems) are more urgent and extensive than many of us have hitherto recognized. For reasons of strategy, as well as for other considerations, all political leaders were agreed at the beginning of the war that the Union Armed Forces should be retained within the African continent. This, of course, included Libya; and after the successful North African campaign South African units went to Italy.

It is no denial of democracy to admit that in South Africa bitter differences of political faith have frequently been evident. At the critical moment in 1939 when Smuts took over, General Hertzog besought his followers to refrain from anything "which may even savour of unconstitutional action." This appeal was endorsed by Dr. Malan and has been lived up to by South Africans in general. Consider what has been gained for the British cause by their decision to follow the policy of Field Marshal Smuts: Had their decision been otherwise, enemy activity might have interrupted the supply route round the Cape while Egypt was still in danger. That would have meant disaster.



#### **NOT TO BE PUBLISHED**

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**These bulletins are not official statements. They are compiled from published sources and intended to provide the starting point for group discussions.**

## SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Some New-Zelanders think that we have handled our Native problem better than have the South Africans theirs. Do you agree?
2. "The colonial attitude . . . was based on the conviction . . . that if the Dutchman was allowed to supplant the Briton in shaping the destinies of South Africa they, and all they stood for, would be in mortal peril." (Wingfield-Stratford, in reference to the loyalty of the British overseas possessions at the time of the Boer War.) Is that, in the main, the true explanation?
3. Bernard Shaw has suggested that the white and the black races ought to mingle freely by marriage so as to breed a new stock really adapted to African conditions in the modern world. Is it a good idea?
4. What real advantages does any community enjoy as a result of the excellence of its architecture?
5. Which approach to the Native question do you favour?
  - (a) Strong control by their white rulers.
  - (b) Segregation into special areas, where the Native customs can be preserved.
  - (c) Admission to equal citizenship, along with the whites.
  - (d) Any other suggested scheme.
6. What steps do you think the South Africans should take to protect themselves against a possible failure of the gold market?
7. Do you agree that the former German South-west Africa should now be included in the Union?
8. What steps, if any, should be taken to foster the arts of literature, music, sculpture, and so on, and the sciences, in a young country such as New Zealand or South Africa?
9. Was the British Government wise in granting, so soon after the Boer War, complete self-government to the South African colonies?
10. To what extent do you think international sporting events (such as a "Springbok" tour) help the cause of mutual understanding between the countries concerned?
11. What do these Dutch words mean: trek, uitspan, burg, biltong, kop, kraal, stoep, veld? Can you add to the list?



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